# Moderators' Report/
# Principal Moderator Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel Project Qualification

Higher Project (P201)

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# Higher Project Qualification

## Introduction

Projects follow the same processes as traditional GCSEs and GCEs. As with any GCSE or GCE, each unit is awarded to ensure that the standard is established and will be maintained. It is necessary to ensure consistency of standard in each examination window and as a result of this, grade boundaries may be subject to change.

## Suitability of work submitted

The Higher Project qualification requires that students submit evidence for four assessment objectives.

Students need to select, plan and carry out a project that uses relevant skills and methods to reach their project objectives. During the development of their project they need to obtain, select and use relevant information sources from a range of sources and, where appropriate, from both primary and secondary sources in order to complete their project outcome.

The students are given the best opportunity to produce relevant evidence for the qualification if they are supported in choosing a research question to address or a design brief or commission to complete that requires research to take place that is relevant to the project outcome.

For AO1 students need to supply a completed project proposal form and activity log that is focused on the requirements to plan and manage the project. To access marks in mark band 2 the students need to describe any problems encountered and how they were overcome. The project activity log should demonstrate that the learners have monitored their project progress against the timescales given in section 3 of the proposal form and discussed any issues with this including any problems encountered and how they were actioned. Both the project proposal form and the activity log should be supplied on the relevant Pearson paperwork that is available to download from the Project webpage.

The activity log should not just be a diary of the project journey but should be a working document that students use to chart decisions and changes made throughout their project study. Justification of any changes made should be given in the activity log and the student should also use their log to demonstrate that they have followed their proposed plan for their development of the project.

For AO2 students need to demonstrate that they have gathered and used resources that are appropriate to their project title and these resources should be clearly identified in a bibliography that would allow the sources to be fully retrievable. Resources should be relevant to the project objectives. Students should be encouraged to comment on the reliability of their sources.

For AO3 the students need to develop and realise their intended project outcome. This can be done in the form of a written report, an investigation, an artefact or a performance. Ideas need to be developed that show some understanding of the topic and some evidence of alternative points of view/design should be seen. The resultant work should be logically sequenced and show coherence of thought.

AO4 requires students to review both the process and the outcome of their project showing what skills and knowledge were developed and ideas for follow up work. They should assess how well they managed and performed and these comments should incorporate feedback from others.

The most successful project titles were those that stated a clear research question/design brief/commission for the student to investigate and or make and ones that also gave scope for argument and counter-argument or discussion of choices for designs/scenery/performances. The least successful titles at this level were those that gave a statement to investigate, as opposed to a research question to investigate or a design brief to fulfill. Such titles did not allow students to focus their research skills on the development of an alternative argument or opinion.

In some centres' work, the project titles given prohibited the students from fully addressing the assessment objectives, particularly with regard to AO3. However, it is pleasing to report that in this moderation series a very interesting range of successful project titles were seen that spanned across numerous curriculum areas and areas of students interests. Also, at the higher end of the mark scale, some excellent learner work was seen that demonstrated in depth development of the project title and a maturity of understanding that compared very well to the lower end of the level 3 EPQ work.

Artefact projects were particularly interesting in their diversity of topics chosen.

Where students carried out their project as part of group work centres are asked to note that individual learners should be encouraged to set their own project objectives that they can research, develop and review within the group. Peer review is useful in these circumstances to inform the evidence for assessment objective 4.

**Student Performance**

As at all levels with the Project qualifications, regarding the written report format, this was seen to be most successful when students chose a project title in the form of a question and then set out to gather relevant sources of data to address their chosen question and to answer it. By posing a question to research students can provide their own viewpoint and then look at a range of sources of information to prove or disprove their views. Conclusions can be drawn and comments made on the reliability and validity of both primary and secondary sources.

The most successful written reports are those where the student carries out a review of their research sources and then enters into a balanced discussion, using their sources, to report on their project question. Conclusions should be drawn that are formed from the research material gathered and the learners own opinion can be discussed.

The most successful artefact projects are those in which the plans and designs are clearly relevant to the initial brief and objectives on the project proposal form. Also, where students take time to consider and document ideas for alternative design choices and reasons why these are not carried forward to the final project outcome. Less successful design projects seen in this series contained information about the design process but did not show how this was relevant to the brief posed at the outset.

Artefact projects need to be supplied with information regarding relevant research sources and how these are used to develop the final outcome. This evidence can be supplied in the form of an annotated sketchbook. Also, regarding the choice of a performance outcome, this outcome needs to be supported by student evidence that demonstrates how the final piece has been developed, possibly through evidence of rehearsals and why decisions are made for changes to the original ideas or for refinements for the final performances.

**Assessment**

Although most centres' assessment practices are sound, some centres are still seen to be awarding marks rather leniently across all four assessment objectives.

Some centres are awarding marks for AO1 in mark band 2 when the project proposal forms were very brief. Also, more detail is often seen to be needed in sections 3 and 4 of the project proposal form for marks in mark band 2 for AO1. Many instances were seen where sections 3 and 4 of the project proposal form were completed generically. Information about activities, timescales and resources required for the project should be relevant to the student's choice of project and not just lists of requirements such as 'access to books and the internet'.

The project proposal form is an important part of the assessment evidence and should not be completed hastily. It is recommended, where possible, that it is typed on computer, allowing the proposal form to evolve with the project. Section 3, where students need to give thoughtful ideas for the main activities that they need to carry out to complete their project outcome and relevant timescales, is of particular importance. Where this is completed in a non-specific and hurried manner, it is not possible for the student to show how they have followed their agreed plan for their activities to complete their project therefore restricting access to marks in mark band 2 for AO1. This also restricts in depth comments being made for parts of AO4.Learners need to use the timescales given in section 3 of the proposal form to monitor their progress and discuss this in the activity log. The timescales given in section 3 of the project proposal form should be specific enough to allow monitoring of the project process and they should also

demonstrate that sufficient guided learning hours have been used to support full development of the project outcome.

In some proposal forms seen, the objectives were not always clear and measurable. Some students seemed unclear as to the meaning of an objective and would benefit from some further guidance here before completing their proposal form.

Regarding AO2, some projects were submitted without clear bibliographies making it difficult to check and to retrieve the sources used. Where a bibliography was included it did not always contain all of the references used within the project. Some of the references included Wikipedia or search engines rather than authentic web pages, journals or books. Some of the candidates used referencing within the project and downloaded web pages that they had used instead.

Most of the students used primary and secondary research, and where primary was used it was mainly demonstrated by the use of a questionnaire. Some candidates provided only a very superficial analysis of their primary data, which did not support detailed development of their project outcome. Centres do not need to include all completed questionnaires where they are available. A detailed analysis of results gained is sufficient here.

Some questionnaires seen would benefit from containing questions that were more focussed on the research question or design brief and, therefore, more likely to provide primary data that could be used to develop the project.

Some good practice included thorough, perceptive and relevant discussion of the reliability and relevance of the information. The higher scoring learners in this objective provided excellent literature reviews that showed thorough understanding of how the sources were relevant to the project title and also commented on the credibility of the source itself.

Regarding AO3, all students' work seen did attempt to develop and realise their projects. Some centres submitted extremely well thought out projects that were interesting and informative. This is to be commended. Several entries seen showed overlap of depth with the EPQ at level 3.

However, in some work sampled, the evidence given for AO3 was not always relevant to the project title or project objectives given in the project proposal form therefore making it difficult to agree marks awarded in mark band 2. Some student evidence sampled lacked coherence and was restricted by numerous spelling and grammatical errors. Where students are working towards a design brief or commission, it is important that the evidence submitted shows how the final artefact was developed and reasons for choice of, for example, materials, colours and designs is included to demonstrate the development of the outcome. The best artefact projects gave solid reasons for the final design choice and evidence that alternative designs were considered.

Equally, where performance outcomes are presented, the evidence should include why the performance evolved as it did giving reasons for changes made in rehearsals, for example, and how these changes benefited the final piece.

In most students work, the evidence for AO4 was seen to sit across both mark bands. Centres need to ensure that all students are supported in providing a review of their project work that addresses all the requirements for AO4 and does not just focus on the actual project outcome. This evidence should review the project process including a review of the students own learning and performance, including use of feedback, stating which objectives were or were not met and why, giving a description of skills and knowledge developed and learnt during the project and also giving ideas for follow up work.

Full reviews were seldom seen. Reviews can be supported by peer review where appropriate. This is particularly relevant where group work has been undertaken.

**Centre Performance**

The Level 2 Project is a qualification that attracts 60 GLH and students need to be given a sufficient amount of time (at least 20GLH) to develop their skills and knowledge relevant to their area of study. It is recommended that centres use at least this number of guided learning hours to actually teach the relevant research skills that the students will need to develop their project successfully. Some centres are still not directing the students to provide clear bibliographies of all sources used.

Only the minority of centres were seen to be internally standardising marks awarded by centre assessors. In some instances, where internal verification was seen to be carried out within a centre and candidate marks changed as a result of this procedure, the marks submitted for the candidate were not those advised by the internal verifier.

There are still issues surrounding group work. Where students research the same project title, centres must ensure that all students have their own individual roles and responsibilities so that they can provide individual evidence for their project process and outcome. These roles and responsibilities can be clearly demonstrated in the individual's project proposal form as discrete project objectives that sit underneath the overall group project title.

Evidence for AO4 is still seen to be weak in most cases. Although many level 2 centres do support their students in carrying out an oral presentation (e.g. to their peer group to tell them about their project), only a minority of centres support their students in using peer evaluation for some evidence towards AO4 – this is a lost opportunity.

Note that, although an oral presentation is not a mandatory requirement for AO4 at level 2, it does provide information that can very usefully be used by the students in judging their own performance and how well they have

managed. Where this is not conducted students would still benefit from a discussion with the tutor/assessor about how well they have conducted their project and, again, this information could be used for evidence towards AO4.

Best assessment practice was evident where centres implemented internal verification of assessment to ensure that marks awarded to the students were supported by the evidence provided by the students. This was particularly important where more than one assessor was involved in the delivery and assessment of the qualification or where more than one type of outcome was being submitted across a cohort of students. However, in a minority of cases, internal verification processes failed to result in necessary changes being made to marks awarded by centres although the moderation process demonstrated that these changes were necessary.

At level 2 assessors can award an extra mark for each assessment objective if the student has worked fairly independently. Centres are advised to justify the award of this mark; some centres just annotated +1 in the marks column.

However, a number of excellent Higher Projects were seen in this series. These were interesting to read, met all the required criteria for mark band 2 and clearly supported learners in expanding their skills base that should inform all aspects of further study.